CIN
52

Building a Better Universe

There's no way to build suspense when the reader knows how the story ends even before they've read the first page, right?

Geoff Johns, Grant Morrison, Greg Rucka, & Mark Waid are about to disabuse fans of that notion for once and for all.

DC revealed numerous ***One Year Later*** story hooks in their solicitations for the March-release titles—but February's pre-***One Year Later*** issues of almost two dozen core DC Universe titles presented readers with one startling revelation after another... revelations that seemed far removed from the premises described for March's titles.

And to find out how the DC Universe gets from point A to point B, readers will need to pick up the weekly series ***52*** when it begins in May—for in those pages, all ***One Year Later***-related answers will be revealed.

At a panel in WonderCon, the quartet of ***52*** writers, along with DCU Executive Editor *Dan DiDio* and editor *Steve Wacker*, the focus of ***52***, discussed the ramifications of ***Infinite Crisis***, and near-future plans for the DC Universe.

Asked about the larger scope of ***52***, DiDio said that the year-long weekly series will address the establishment of the DCU, as well as any changes that may have occurred as a result of ***Crisis***. "Once we've brought back the multi-verse…" DiDio began to say in explaining what ***52*** will accomplish. As the audience gave a collective "huh?" DiDio quickly corrected himself, chuckling and saying, "I mean, *if* we were building one world…"

The Executive Editor added that ***52*** will be, in large part, an exploration of the DCU following ***Infinite Crisis*** and the changes it has brought to the world. As such, it will touch upon the larger tone of the DCU, politics, science, religion, if there is magic in the DCU post-***Crisis***— and if there is, taking a look at its new direction. While readers will be able to learn about various individual characters in the course of the series, the ultimate goal of the series is to look at the shared universe, the *whole*.

feeling or camaraderie—not a "Silver Age shininess", Waid continued, but rather a sense of balance. The heroes of the DCU are the firemen and policemen of the DCU, and both ***Crisis*** and ***52*** are a chance to reaffirm that notion.

Continuing this idea, Wacker explained that the message of ***52*** is that "return" that Waid spoke of. Comic stories, Wacker said, move in a figurative pendulum; while stories begin at a central point, they can go to an extreme over time as Superman's death or Superman-Blue/Superman Red show. Over time, characters and stories come back towards the central point, not for a restart, Wacker stressed, but a return to the core concept to the central idea of the character.

Morrison said that, in his view, DC is not using ***Infinite Crisis*** and ***52*** to go back to the Silver Age shininess of days gone by: instead, they're using the stories to turn up the contrast in the DCU—to make the dark that much darker, and the heroes really, *really* good.

Morrison added that this is something that the DC Universe does every twenty years or so—that is, taking everything that has happened in the intervening time and then moving the entire Universe forward. As Morrison said, this approach leads to some very good stories as the entire universe takes a step forward.

Johns said ***Crisis*** and ***52*** are being used to revitalize the entire DCU line. DiDio added they didn't want to get into "one-upsmanship" like they did ten years ago, where subsequent crossovers were weaker than the previous, and eventually the entire line falters. As a result, DC intends to stay away from linewide crossovers for quite a while after ***Infinite Crisis***, because they want the universe to be an exciting place in its own right, rather than merely a setting for one big event after another.

So how does the overall storyline work? Waid said that there *won't* be spotlight issues on the individual main characters (Steel, The Question, etc), but rather, the series will have a feel similar to ***Lost***—that is, multiple storylines will

up," but rather are constrained by the fact that these are real people and real characters. Rather than finding this a hindrance, Morrison said, he finds it a fascinating way to write – telling the stories about people he sees as *real*, rather than fictional constructs that can be bent and twisted at any whim, and made to act in ways they would never act. The work of the creators in ***Infinite Crisis*** and ***52***, Morrison said, has been to increase the focus by which we view it – sharpening the image to a degree that hasn't been seen before, allowing clear views of characters as well as their larger world.

Mark Waid stressed that the purpose of ***Infinite Crisis*** isn't to fix anything that's "wrong." Instead, Waid sees it as a part of a long-term cycle. DC books have become darker and grittier over the last few years, and ***Crisis*** is a means of bringing things back a little. The bottom line of the DCU, Waid explained, is that the characters of the DCU like each other, and ***Crisis*** allows for the chance to get back to that

be seen in each issue, with some moving to the foreground, and others moving to the background throughout the run.

Agreeing with Waid, DiDio said that overall, one of the main goals of ***52*** is to show that the characters live and act in the same place, and that ***52*** will give a cohesiveness to the DCU that hasn't been seen before.

"We want this to be a destination book for everyone," DiDio said. "To do that, we've got to have the best creators on it, and we have them – and all four writers are working together on every issue."

That creative team includes, in addition to the writers, layout artist *Keith Giffen*, cover artist *J.G. Jones*, and a talented team of finishing artists, including *Joe Bennett* (who will launch the series), *Ken Lashley, Chris Batista, Don Kramer, & Shawn Moll*. In addition, ***52*** will feature backup features that kick off with a ten-part history of the DC Universe by *Dan Jurgens & Art Thibert* and continue with new two-page origins of the top forty characters of the DC Universe, written by Waid and illustrated by a variety of top talents.

The stark cover image of ***52 Week 1*** led to questions regarding the rift between Batman, Superman, and Wonder Woman, which DiDio described as "essential" both to ***Crisis*** and the larger story that was being told. "All three characters are, in their mind, working for the 'greater good,'" DiDio said, "But there is a difference in just what that 'greater good' is." Johns added that the first page of ***Infinite Crisis #7*** would go a long way towards answering readers' questions regarding the relationship of the three heroes.

Underscoring the massive amount of planning that has gone into ***Infinite Crisis, One Year Later, 52***, and the DCU as a whole, DiDio explained that they currently have the DCU planned out through 2008, with "milestones" along the way that all editors and creators know about. That means that everyone is working together with a clear vision of the big picture, and no one is forced to make last-minute changes to dovetail with continuity. DiDio also said that the plan, even with its milestones in place, allows a great deal of flexibility..

Morrison explained that he views the DC Universe as a virtual reality – its own world with its own rules, and people who live there that is as real as ours. With that in mind, Morrison said, you can't go into the DCU and "smash things

Asked if one result of ***Crisis*** and ***52*** would be an influx and addition of more ethnically and racially diverse characters into the DC Universe the answer from all was an enthusiastic "yes." Rucka explained that for years, "depth and detail" in the DCU has been predominantly "white and male," and with ***52*** and the DCU post-***Crisis***, it's time to look at the rest of the world. "We want to make them iconic, and make them last," Rucka said, "but that has to be done very carefully."

DiDio added that one of the mandates handed down from Publisher and President *Paul Levitz* was that, as the ***52*** team moved around the DCU, looking into different areas both new and old, more diversity must be created.

DiDio said that, in many respects, ***Infinite Crisis*** closes the door on the DCU past, and that everything is new from there on—a new tone, a new direction, a new style. Rucka added that one of the main goals of the creators of ***52***, as well as those throughout the DCU, is to make the stories more mythical and primal in nature.

Experience the universe-rebuilding for yourself on May 10th, when ***52 Week 1***, a $2.50 comic, is scheduled for release.

by Matt Brady
(with Cliff Biggers)

Comic Shop Newsarama

Produced by Comic Shop News in cooperation with Matt Brady and newsarama.com

Peter David Makes His Marvel

At early February's Wondercon, *Peter David* confirmed that has signed a three-year exclusive contract with Marvel. Fans of his ***Fallen Angel*** and ***Soulsearchers*** need not worry, though: the contract allows him to continue writing both of these series.

So why the exclusive? "They asked me," David said. "It's really not much more complicated than that. They made me a great offer that boiled down to, 'Hey, you wanna keep doing the exact same thing you're doing now, except we'll cover medical insurance and we'll guarantee you work."

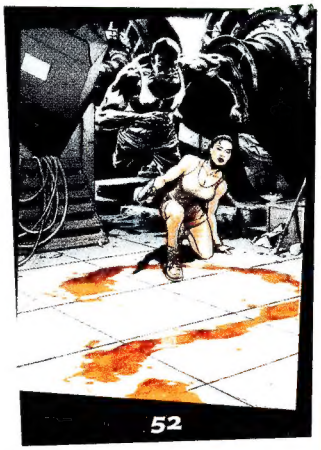
While no other *Peter David*-penned projects were announced at the convention, it seems likely that he'll be adding other work to his schedule in addition to ***X-Factor*** and ***Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man.***

Coming Comics DC in May

Jimmy Olsen, the Daily Planet's "Mister Action," is young, brilliant, and reckless! For this week's story he must become the director-for-a-day of P.R.O.J.E.C.T. With top agents assigned to protect him, he's looking forward to an easy day of jet-setting and international liaisons all in the name of scientific discovery. Instead, P.R.O.J.E.C.T. receives a terrifying directive — to take down a rogue Superman! See Jimmy in action in ***All-Star Superman #4*** by *Grant Morrison & Frank Quitely.*

Aquaman's search for news of his father takes him to the surface world and its civilization for the first time in *Kurt Busiek & Butch Guice's* ***Aquaman: Sword of Atlantis #42***, where he meets a new ally and ends up in a pitched battle

The event of the year—quite literally!—begins in May with the launch of ***52***, the epic weekly series by *Geoff Johns, Grant Morrison, Greg Rucka, & Mark Waid*, with breakdowns by *Keith Giffen*, covers by *J.G. Jones*, and art by *Joe Bennett, Ruy Jose & Jack Jadson.* After ***Infinite Crisis*** and before ***One Year Later,*** the DCU spent a year without Superman,



Batman and Wonder Woman. A year in which those heroes were needed more than ever as the fate of the world hung in the balance. Also, starting in ***52 Week #2:*** "The History of the DC Universe," a ten-part backup feature by *Dan Jurgens & Art Thibert* that takes you on a tour through the legendary past of the DCU. (For more info on ***52***, see this issue's front-page story.)

James Robinson's "Face the Face" continues its eight-part run in May's ***Detective Comics #819*** (illustrated by *Leonard Kirk & Andy Clarke)* and ***Batman #653*** (illustrated by *Don Kramer & Michael Bair).* The body count of dead villains continues to mount as Batman—joined by Jason Bard—hunts for Gotham's two-faced vigilante. Meanwhile, Robin must deal with his life as an orphan...

The new Catwoman turns to a longtime JSA member for training in ***Catwoman #55*** by *Will Pfeifer, David Lopez, & Alvaro Lopez*—but is the East End ready for a brutal, violent heroine? And Selina questions her decision to step away from her life as Catwoman. But it's too late to go back…isn't it?

The race is on to become the world's most super-powered nation — and when that nation is China, the new Checkmate faces its biggest challenge ever! See how they respond in ***Checkmate #2*** by *Greg Rucka & Jesus Saiz.*

Infinite Crisis may wrap up in April, but its ramifications continue to resonate through the DCU. See what happens when the Spirit of Vengeance must convince its human host, Crispus Allen, to accept his new role as the Spectre in ***Crisis Aftermath: The Spectre #1*** by *Will Pfeifer & Cliff Chiang.* You see, Allen wants nothing to do with the Spectre or his holy mission — and he's putting that mission into jeopardy!

The devastated city of Bludhaven is the focus of ***Crisis Aftermath: The Battle for Bludhaven #s 3 & 4*** by *Jimmy Palmiotti, Justin Gray, & Dan Jurgens.* When a door-to-door search uncovers the body of a comatose hero, things suddenly become more complicated. And trouble begins when Major Force arrives, and the secret behind the government's chilling new SHADE agency is uncovered!

The Wolfriders and WaveDancers meet at last in *Wendy & Richard Pini's* ***ElfQuest: The Discovery #3.*** As Sunstream and Brill finally celebrate their Recognition, Surge tests the limits of his power to prevent the WaveDancers from entering the Crystal Palace. But when Wolfrider chief Cutter tries to reason with Surge, not all the Palace's magic can prevent what happens next.

It's the rematch of the century as Green Arrow and Deathstroke pick up where they left off in ***Identity Crisis***… and this is one assassination you won't want to miss! But Oliver Queen has too much work to do as the new Mayor of Star City to die just yet! See the sparks—and arrows—fly in ***Green Arrow #62*** by *Judd Winick, Scott McDaniel, & Andy Owens.*

Cyborg Superman returns as "Revenge of the Green Lanterns" continues in *Geoff Johns, Ivan Reis, & Marc Campos'* ***Green Lantern #12***. Blackest night falls when Hal Jordan and Guy Gardner find themselves face to face with a group of Green Lantern P.O.W.s deep in the heart of Sector 3601. Meanwhile, learn about the case that has taken over John Stewart's life.

Will Kyle Rayner survive an encounter with the Thanagarian bounty hunter sent to hunt him down? And why have the Guardians of the Universe forbidden all Green Lanterns from coming to Ion's aide? *Ron Marz & Greg Tocchini* answer these and other questions in ***Ion #2.***

Steve Englehart, Tom Derenick, & Mark Farmer kick off the four-part "A Game of Chance" in ***JLA Classified #22.*** This story focuses on the long-lost "Detroit League": Steel, Vixen, Vibe, Gypsy and team leader Martian Manhunter. J'onn J'onzz takes the novice members of the untested Justice League to a remote location for some badly needed training — but as luck would have it, Amos Fortune intends to build up his Royal Flush Gang's reputation by destroying the fledgling group!

The thrilling new story by legendary ***Justice Society*** writer *Paul Levitz* and superstar penciller *Rags Morales* continues in ***JSA #85*** as the ghosts of the JSA's past rise to fight the team today! Plus, more insight into the secrets of the Gentleman Ghost!

Two Nightwings are on the prowl in New York — and one is a murderous madman! Now the twin crime bosses — the Pierce Brothers — want the head of Nightwing... and they don't care which one! See what happens next in ***Nightwing #120*** by *Bruce Jones, Joe Dodd, & Bit.*

In *Adam Beechen & Freddie Williams II's* ***Robin #150,*** he mystery of who framed Robin is solved, the true fate of Batgirl is revealed, and Robin receives an offer he may not live to refuse!

Where did Supergirl come from? Whatever happened to Brainiac 5, and just what did he do with Dream Girl's body? Who is Dream Boy? Plus, which of the Legionnaires has a secret identity — as a Science Police officer? Find out in ***Supergirl & the Legion of Super-Heroes #18*** by *Mark Waid, Barry Kitson, & Mick Gray.*

From the pages of the smash hit ***Villains United*** comes the six-issue miniseries ***Secret Six*** by *Gail Simone, Brad Walker, & Jimmy Palmiotti.* They're a mysterious team — with a confidential roster — that walks the line between good and evil…and takes on the dirtiest, craziest missions in the DCU. And their first mission is to rescue one of their own from a North Korean prison before he's executed.

This spring, writer/artist Bill Willingham launches ***ShadowPact,*** a new series featuring the mismatched magical heroes from ***Day of Vengeance*** as the ragtag band reunites to stand against another menace to our universe! Join Nightmaster, Ragman, Nightshade, Blue Devil, Enchantress and Detective Chimp as they face brand-new villains—and their first issue features a guest appearance by Superman!

Greg Rucka, Ed Benes, & Alex Lei reveal the shocking truth behind Supergirl's visit to Kandor in ***Supergirl #7,*** which also features another battle with Power Girl.

Kurt Busiek, Geoff Johns, & Pete Woods continue the eight-part "Up, Up, & Away" in ***Superman #652 & Action #839.*** Damaged and vulnerable, Clark Kent continues to

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strive to do his superheroic duty as a legion of villains begin their assault. Meanwhile, Luthor continues in his efforts to destroy the Man of Steel... and his recent discoveries may give him the ability to achieve his ultimate goal! Meanwhile, three unexpected words mark a turning point for Lois and Clark!

In case you haven't heard, there's a Superman film coming up this summer—and that means that there's a Superman film adaptation on the way! *Martin Pasko & Matt Haley* do the honors on ***Superman Returns: The Movie Adaptation,*** which is being advance solicited (it won't actually reach stores until early July) in two formats: an adaptation-only 72-page book, and an expanded 168-page trade that adds a variety of classic Superman tales, including the special origin tale originally presented in ***The Amazing World of Superman: Metropolis Edition #1.***

Mark Verheiden takes over as writer of ***Superman/Batman*** beginning with #27—and he's joined by guest artist *Kevin Maguire* for his first issue! This standalone tale spotlights Power Girl and Huntress; can this all-different World's Finest team save Superman and Batman as an old villain commits his final act of revenge?

DC's collected editions for May include:

•***Batman: ThrillKiller,*** a new release of the Elseworlds tale by *Howard Chaykin & Dan Brereton;*

•***Batman: Under the Hood Volume 2,*** collecting ***Batman #s 645-650 & Batman Annual #1;***

•***Batman: The Dynamic Duo Archives Volume 2,*** collecting the Silver Age tales by *Gardner Fox, Ed Herron, Bill Finger, Sheldon Moldoff, Carmine Infantino, Joe Giella, Sid Greene, & Murphy Anderson* that originally appeared in ***Batman #s 168-171 & Detective #s 334-339;***

•***Cartoon Network Block Party Vol 3: Can You Dig It?,*** collecting selected stories from #s 1-4, 6-8, & 14;

•***Cartoon Network Block Party Vol 4: Blast Off,*** collecting selected stories #s 5-13 &15;

•***Green Lantern Corps: Recharge,*** a trade paperback collection of the five-issue miniseries by *Geoff Johns, Dave Gibbons, Patrick Gleason, & Christian Alamy;*

•***JLA Classified: New Maps of Hell,*** collecting the *Warren Ellis-Butch Guice* story arc from ***JLA Classified #s 10-15;***

•***Power Girl,*** collecting the various origins of one of the DCU's most powerful heroines as originally presented in ***Showcase #s 97-99, Secret Origins #11,*** and ***JSA Classified #s 1-4;***

•***Showcase Presents Superman Volume 2,*** a hefty black-and-white trade paperback collecting Man of Steel adventures from ***Action #s 258-275 & Superman #134-145;***

•***Supergirl: Power,*** collecting the *Jeph Loeb-Ian Churchill-Norm Rapmund* story arc from ***Supergirl #s 0-5;*** and

•***Wonder Woman: Destiny Calling,*** the fourth and final volume of the *George Pérez* ***Wonder Woman*** run, featuring stories from ***Wonder Woman #s 20-24*** and ***Annual #1.***

Coming Comics CMX/DC in May

Find out what happens when love gets in the way of fate in ***Oyayubihime Infinity Volume One*** by *Toru Fujieda.* Long ago, a group of friends banded together — and now the whole gang has been reincarnated in the present day. Each has a reminder of the past: a butterfly-shaped birthmark on their thumbs. When the marks touch, they catch a glimpse of their shared past, though what they see doesn't always match.

Coming Comics WildStorm DC in May

The ABC Who's Who series continues with ***ABC A-Z: Smax & First American,*** written by *Peter Hogan & Steve Moore,* with art by *Zander Cannon & Kyle Baker.*

Readers who were wondering what happened to the final issues of ***Albion*** will be pleased to see them back on the schedule for spring/summer release. ***Albion #5*** is plotted by *Alan Moore* with scripts by *Leah Moore & John Reppion* and art by *Shane Oakley & George Freeman.*

Captain Atom faces off against the Authority in ***Captain Atom: Armageddon #8*** by *Will Pfeifer, Giuseppe Camuncoli, & Sandra Hope.* Nikola, whose manifestation of Void's powers is nearly complete, enters the fray with Grifter in tow. But whose side is she on?

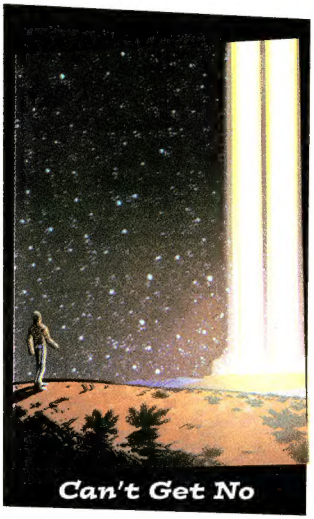
Majestic comes to an end with #17—but what a conclusion it is! Majestic is dying, and the World Engine mechanism cannot be prevented from recreating the Earth unless time and circumstances prevail. Can

Majestic be the greatest hero of his age one last time?

WildStorm's only collected editions for May is ***Majestic Volume 2,*** collecting ***Majestic #s 8-12.***

Coming Comics Vertigo/DC in May

Rick Veitch focuses on the ultimate grafitti victim in ***Can't Get No,*** an original 350+ page graphic novel presented in the landscape format normally reserved for comic strip reprint books such as ***Garfield.*** Reeling from the financial collapse of his business, high-profile corporate executive Chad Roe descends into a night of depravity, only to wake up a "marked" man – literally – his body covered in a permanent tattoo executed in an indelible ink of his own design. But Chad will be only one of the many whose lives are forever changed after that Tuesday morning of September 11, 2001. Instead of picking up the pieces, he takes to the road, heading straight into the shell-shocked heart of America on a desperate search for salvation.



Vertigo collected editions for May include:

•***DMZ Volume One: On the Ground,*** collecting the first five issues of the *Brian Wood-Riccardo Burchielli* series; and

•***Fables Volume Seven: Arabian Nights (And Days),*** collecting ***Fables #s 42-47.***

Coming from DC Direct

In conjunction with the debut of the long-awaited ***Superman Returns*** film, DC Direct is offering a number of collectibles, including:

• The almost-10"-tall ***Superman Returns: In Flight Statue;***

•*The* 13.5" tall ***Superman Returns Superman Maquette;***

•Three ***Superman Returns Busts*** depicting ***Clark Kent, Superman,*** and ***Lex Luthor***

•The ***Superman Returns: Superman 13" Deluxe Collector Figure,*** similar to last fall's now-sold-out Superman figure, complete with an authentic movie costume, 28 points of articulation, an alternate set of hands, a stand to display the figure and a full-color Certificate of Authenticity; and

•The ***Superman Returns Kryptonite Prop Replica,*** a cold-cast porcelain piece molded from the original Kryptonite movie prop.

DC Direct is offering one of the most lavish, upscale collectibles in Superman history this October with the release of the ***Superman 1:4 Scale Museum Quality Statue.*** This 18" Superman figure is the most realistic and classic representation of the Man of Steel ever produced! The mixed-media figure is composed of resin, metal, and an expertly crafted fabric costume. Superman is presented on a sculpted base featuring the unique architecture details of Metropolis. This very exclusive, limited-edition figure displays unprecedented authenticity that perfectly captures the world's most popular icon. This figure isis packaged in a gold-foil stamped black gift box, limited up to 1,250 pieces, and includes a certificate of authenticity.

Karen Palinko transforms one of *Alex Ross's* most popular covers into a stunning statue with October's ***Superman Forever #1 Statue.*** This limited edition, hand-painted cold cast porcelain sculpture measures approximately 12" tall.

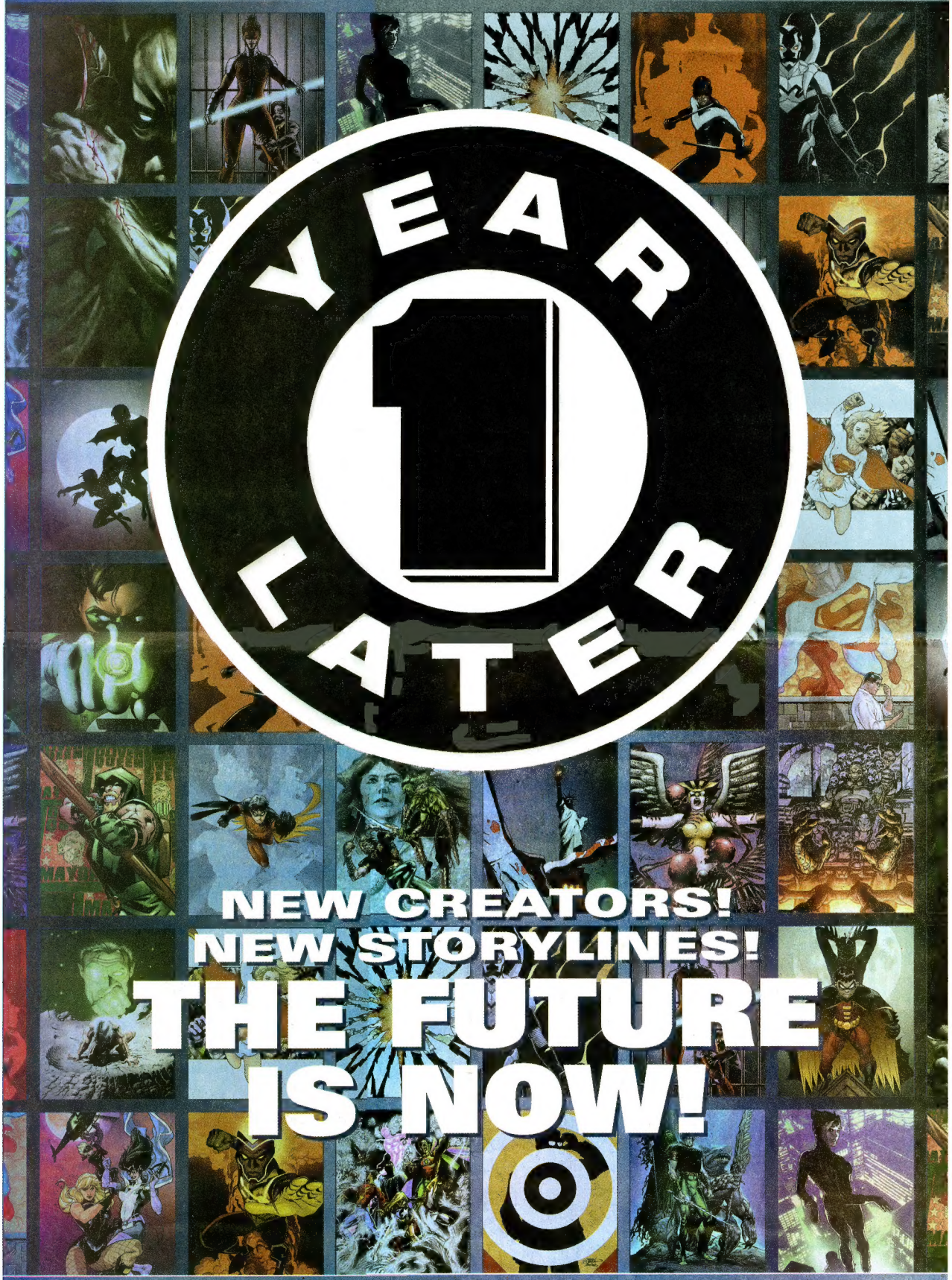
The DC Direct Deluxe Figure line continues with October's ***Batman 13" Deluxe Collector Figure.*** This modern 13" figure includes four different stylized batarangs and a stand to display the figure.

DC Direct goes back to the Looney Tunes Treasure Trove again for the ***Looney Tunes***

Continued on page 6

IF INFINITE CRISIS SHOCKED YOU,

YOU WON'T BELIEVE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT!



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NEW STORYLINES!

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DETECTIVE COMICS #817
JSA #83
OUTSIDERS #34

On sale March 8
FIRESTORM:
THE NUCLEAR MAN #23
SUPERGIRL #6

On sale March 15
BIRDS OF PREY #92
GREEN ARROW #60
NIGHTWING #118
SUPERMAN #650
TEEN TITANS #34

On sale March 22
BATMAN #651
CATWOMAN #53
HAWKGIRL #50
JSA CLASSIFIED #10
MANHUNTER #20
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SUPERGIRL AND THE
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On sale March 29
ACTION COMICS #837
BLUE BEETLE #1
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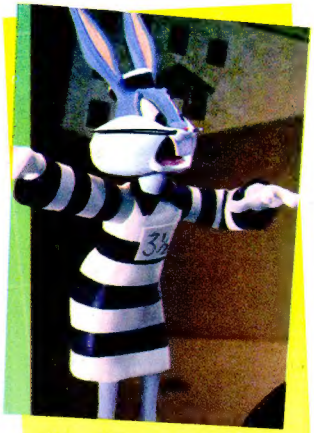


Big House Bunny

Golden Collection Series 3 Action Figures. These figures feature multiple points of articulation, character-specific accessories, and each has a display base with full-color diorama backdrop. Series 3 includes ***"Water, Water EveryHare" Bugs Bunny*** and ***Gossamer Action Figures*** and ***"Big House Bunny" Bugs Bunny*** and ***Yosemite Sam Action Figures.***

What happens when kids outgrow their imaginary friends? They come to Madame Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends! Now this Cartoon Network series is the inspiration for the ***Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends Statue With Frankie,*** sculpted by *Karen Palinko.*

Tim Sale's art is the inspiration for ***Batman: Dark Victory Series One Action Figures,*** featuring ***Commissioner Gordon, Batman, Scarecrow,*** and the ***Penguin & Robin 2-Pack.***

The ***Who's Who Mystery Box*** series continues with ***Set Two,*** featuring 2.5" scale micro trading figures of ***Aquaman, Hawkman, Green Lantern, Red Tornado, Batman,*** and ***Superman Vs. Despero.*** In addition, bonus parts included with each character can be combined to build a complete miniature JLA satellite! Each ***Mystery Box*** also includes a full-color collectible character profile card. Each figure comes in a "blind" mystery box for added collectibility. (Some minor assembly required.)

DC Direct offers a pair of spooky posters just in time for Halloween. One poster features *Eric Powell's* art from the cover of ***Swamp Thing #22,*** while the other features *Tim Bradstreet's* art from ***Hellblazer #189.***

Dark Horse Keeps Whedon TV Alive in Comics Form!

Dark Horse has confirmed that they have plans for further comics based on *Joss Whedon's* ***Buffy the Vampire Slayer*** and ***Serenity.*** While the ***Serenity*** comic will be set within the continuity of the 2004 film ***Firefly,*** the plans for ***Buffy*** are being described as "Season Eight," confirming that the comic book will pick up where the fan-favorite television series left off at the end of its seventh and final season. Whedon will offer guidance on both series, although he has not been named as writer of either book.

Coming Comics Marvel in May

The Marvel ***Civil War*** is about to begin—and it's going to get ugly! *Mark Millar & Steve McNiven* are the architects of the drama that will pit friend against friend in a surprising superhero split. As the war claims its first victims in ***Civil War #1,*** no one is safe as teams, friendships, and families begin to fall apart. Civil War, a Marvel Comics event in seven parts, stars Spider-Man, the New Avengers, the Fantastic Four, the X-Men and the entirety of the Marvel pantheon! Civil War – the cross-over that rewrites the rules - begins here in this double-sized first issue!

Another vital part of the whole ***Civil War*** saga is "The War At Home," a seven-parter that begins in ***Amazing Spider-Man #532,*** by *J. Michael Straczynski & Ron Garney.* After rushing to the aftermath of the Riverbank Massacre to offer aid to its victims, Peter travels with Tony Stark to Washington DC and the White House, where the enactment of the Super Hero Registration Act appears imminent. As the Marvel Universe braces for the implications of legislation that will forever change the societal status of super heroes, Peter will have to make a very important personal decision -- one that just might be the most important decision of his life

Dan Slott & Paul Smith present a ***Civil War*** tie-in tale in ***She-Hulk #8.*** The ramifications of the Civil War threaten the rights of every American super hero. So whose side will Marvel's top superhuman lawyer fight for? And how can she possibly choose, when she feels one way as She-Hulk, and another as Jen Walters?

Marc Guggenheim & Humberto Ramos kick off the six-part "Vendetta," a ***Civil War*** tie-in, in ***Wolverine #42.*** In the aftermath of the Riverbank Tragedy, Logan makes it his personal mission to take down the man responsible. No sooner does he begin his hunt, however, than he discovers that someone else is stalking the same prey: a mysterious trio whose identity -- and disturbing mission -- will come as a shock to many!

T'Challa's heart—and a seat on the Wakandan throne—is Storm's, if she'll just accept his hand in marriage. Question is, does she want it? With a Super Hero Civil War ready to explode in the U.S. and snakes in his own court preparing to make their moves, the road to the altar could not be more complicated. See just *how* complicated in ***Black Panther #16*** by *Reginald Hudlin & Scot Eaton.*

Domino is hired to stop Deadpool's activities in the Central European country of Rumekistan in ***Cable/Deadpool #28*** by *Fabian Nicieza & Lan Medina.* So what are Deadpool's plans? Well, he intends to assassinate the country's imposed ruler, the international terrorist named FlagSmasher. So should she stop him?

Cap's search for his old partner takes him to England in ***Captain America #18*** by *Ed Brubaker & Steve Epting,* where he ends up fighting side-by-side with some very old friends. But Cap and the Winter Soldier aren't the only ones taking the journey abroad: Crossbones and Sin are on a path of revenge that's leading them in the exact same direction...

Sue Storm... dead? That's the catalyst for Johnny Storm's efforts to do whatever it takes to bring his sister back in ***Fantastic Four—A Death in the Family,*** a one-shot by *Karl Kesel & Lee Weeks.*

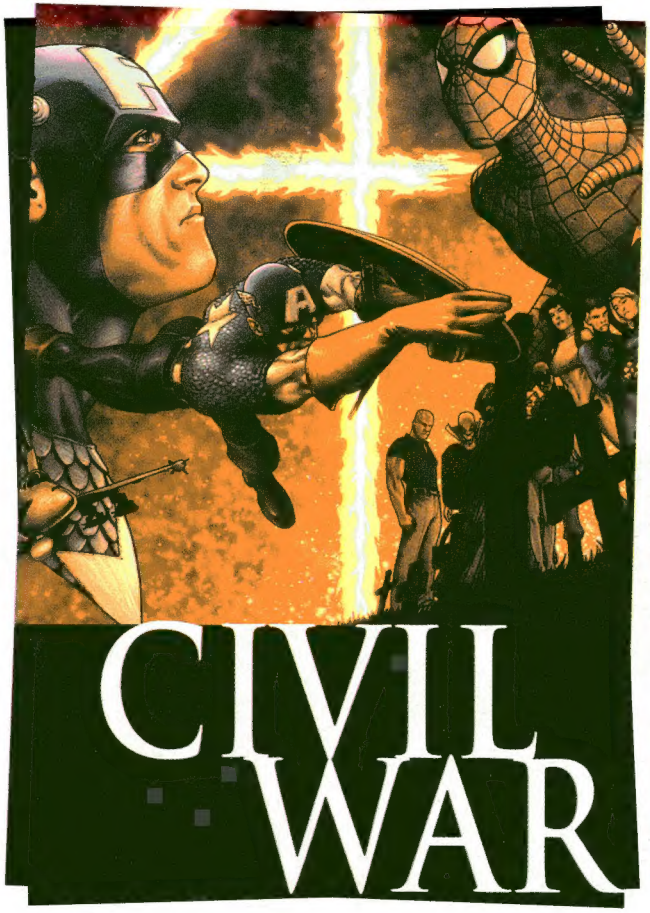
Marvel Knights Four is no longer... and its replacement title, *Four,* is about to end with #30! In this series finale, the Fantastic Four's honorary fifth member, a young super hero with dark intentions, believes he is heir to throne of...Latveria? To prove himself to Dr. Doom, he is determined to take down the FF once and for all—and on national television!

A major character from Peter Parker's past returns in *Peter David & Mike Wieringo's* ***Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man #8.*** Meanwhile, is that the Hobgoblin terrorizing the skies? And if so, how is he connected to the shocking changes in Spider-Man's life?

Richard Corben & Rich Margopoulos offer twisted and irreverent retellings of Edgar Allan Poe's short stories and poems in ***Haunt of Horror: Edgar Allan Poe,*** a three-issue black-and-white limited series.

The Hulk and his Warbound gladiator allies enter their final battle in the Great Arena — where a familiar face from the Marvel Universe returns in ***Incredible Hulk #95*** by *Greg Pak & Carlo Pagulayan.* Faced with betrayal, temptation, and the most terrifying battle the Great Arena has ever seen, will the Hulk stand with his Warbound gladiators — or seize the honors of the Empire?

Tom DeFalco & Pat Olliffe follow up last summer's ***Last Hero Standing*** with a new Marvel Next five-parter, ***Last Planet Standing.*** This time around, it's Galactus who threatens the near-future-Marvelverse—and that means that it's time



to call out the big guns, including Thor, the Warriors Three, the Avengers, Spider-Girl, the Fantastic Five and the Shi'ar Imperial Guard!

Marvel adds another all-ages title to their line with ***Marvel Adventures: The Avengers #1*** by *Jeff Parker & Manuel Garcia.* The first issue pits Captain America, Storm, Iron Man, the Hulk, Giant-Man, Wolverine, and Spider-Man (he, we just report the roster, we don't make it up!...) against Ultron.

Captain America is thrust into a fight for his life at the hands of AIM. Meanwhile an all-new hero is introduced into the Marvel Universe, but is the world ready for Freedom Ring? We'll find out in ***Marvel Team-Up #20*** by *Robert Kirkman & Cory Walker.*

What Marvel did for the 1960s earlier this year, they're doing for the 1970s now. ***Marvel Legacy: The 1970s Handbook*** is just what a handbook published on December 31st, 1979, might have looked like.

S.H.I.E.L.D. does the impossible and arrests Spider-Man! in ***New Avengers #19*** by *Brian Bendis & Mike Deodato.* meanwhile, the secrets of ***House of M*** create more problems for the Avengers as they fight a battle they cannot win...

Punisher: The Tyger, a oneshot by *Garth Ennis & John Severin* that looks at Frank Castle's youth, has been rescheduled for May release.

Just how far will Pietro go to restore the powers of former mutants? As Inhumans battle the last surviving Genoshans, the consequences prove to be horrific. Don't miss ***Son of M #6***—because the repercussions will echo through Marvel's Civil War for months to come!

Klaus Janson writes and illustrates a story that delves into the life of a child who is raised by one of Spidey's foes in the lead story in ***Spider-Man Unlimited #15.***

What better gift can Ben give Alicia for her birthday than a trip to Greece? Well, howsabout a trip to *ancient* Greece? Get ready for some time machine misadventures in ***The Thing #7*** by *Dan Slott & Andrea Di Vito.*

Gah Lak Tus makes his presence known on Earth in ***Ultimate Extinction #5*** by *Warren Ellis & Brandon Peterson.* Millions of civilizations have fallen before its insatiable hunger. Against impossible odds, can Earth

break that curse? Does the combined might of the Ultimates, the X-Men, the Fantastic Four, and Nick Fury stand a chance against a swarm of 100,000 planet-eaters?!

Dr. Doom returns in ***Ultimate Fantastic Four #30*** by *Mark Millar & Greg Land*—but that's not the only problem the FF have to worry with. In this issue, the zombiefied F.F. escape from their Baxter Building prison... the Frightful Four make their debut.. and Johnny Storm finds out he has only 28 days to live!

Spidey has no shortage of guest-stars in ***Ultimate Spider-Man.*** In #94, he crosses paths with Deadpool—and two weeks later, he confronts the monstrous Ultimate Morbius. *Brian Bendis & Mark Bagley* continue to make this *the* must-read Spidey title.

Logan proves more dangerous and unpredictable than ever before in ***Wolverine: Origins*** by *Daniel Way & Steve Dillon.* By mounting a full-scale assault on the White House, Logan has now clearly shown that both no one is beyond his reach. Knowing that Logan is coming for them—and knowing that he will stop at nothing in order to achieve his mysterious objective—the world governments now prepare to take the offensive, using whatever weapons they have at their disposal...

Some of the X-Men's greatest adventures are retold as folktales, myths, and fables from around the world in ***X-Men: Fairy Tales,*** a four-issue limited series by *C.B. Cebulski & Sana Takeda.* In the first issue's story of Momotaro, the Peach-Boy, an old Japanese woodcutter and his wife cut open a giant peach only to find a baby boy with a peach pit for an eye, crying inside! The couple quickly learns that there is more than meets the eye as the baby shoots ruby-red optic blasts when the pit is removed!

Marvel's collected editions for May include:

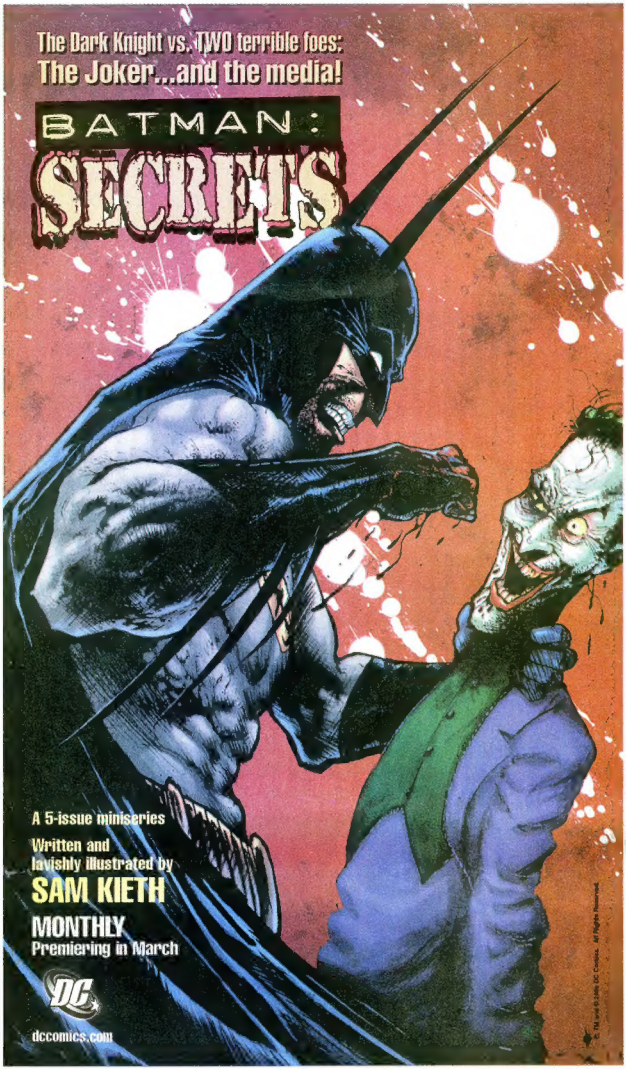
- ***Black Panther: Bad Mutha,*** collecting ***Black Panther #s 10-13;***
- ***Black Widow: The Things They Say About Her,*** collecting the miniseries by *Richard K. Morgan, Sean Phillips, & Bill Sienkiewicz;*
- ***Captain America: Winter Soldier Volume 2 HC,*** reprinting ***Captain America #s 8-9 & 11-14;***
- ***Essential Classic X-Men Volume Two,*** collecting ***X-Men #s 25-53*** and ***Avengers #53;***
- ***Essential Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe—Deluxe Edition Volume Two,*** collecting #s 8-14 of the Who's Who series;
- ***Hulk Visionaries: Peter David Volume Three,*** collecting ***Incredible Hulk #s 349-354, Web of Spider-Man #44,*** and ***Fantastic Four #320;***
- ***Marvel Masterworks: The Fantastic Four Volume Ten,*** collecting the final issues of the classic *Stan Lee-Jack Kirby* ***FF*** run as originally published in #s 94-104;
- ***New Thunderbolts Volume 3: Right of Power,*** collecting ***New Thunderbolts #s 13-18;***
- ***NYX: Wannabe,*** collecting *Joe Quesada & Josh Middleton's* ***NYX #s 1-7;***
- ***Punisher Max Volume Five: The Slavers,*** collecting ***Punisher #s 25-30;***
- ***Sentinel Volume Three: Past Imperfect,*** collecting the new ***Sentinel #s 1-5*** in digest form;
- ***Skrull Kill Krew,*** a trade paperback of the cult classic five-parter by *Grant Morrison, Mark Millar, & Steve Yeowell;*
- ***Spider-Man/Black Cat: The Evil That Men Do HC,*** collecting the six-issue limited series by *Kevin Smith & Terry Dodson;*
- ***Ultimate Spider-Man Volume 15: Silver Sable,*** collecting #s 86-90 and ***Annual #1;***
- ***Ultimate X-Men/ Fantastic Four,*** collecting the two-book story arc as well as ***Official Handbook of the Ultimate Marvel Universe 2005 #s 1 & 2;***
- ***Wolverine Classic Volume Three,*** collecting ***Wolverine #s 11-16;***
- ***Wolverine: Enemy of the State,*** a trade paperback compilation of ***Wolverine #s 26-32;*** and
- ***Wolverine: Origins & Endings HC,*** reprinting ***Wolverine #s 36-40.***

Grant Morrison: The Dark Knight's New King

At the DC Universe panel at Wondercon, it was announced that *Grant Morrison* will be the next regular writer of ***Batman*** following *James Robinson's* eight-part story arc running through ***Batman & Detective*** in March, April, May, and June.

Morrison said that he's already plotted fifteen issues, and in his first issue alone, he will feature fifteen ninja man-bats as well as Talia in a story entitled "Batman & Son". Morrison said that the ***One Year Later*** Batman will be a more of a "fun guy, more healthy", more like the "Neal Adams, hairy-chested, love-god" version of Batman, as Morrison described the popular 1970's version of the character.

No confirmed announcement was made regarding the identity of the artist who'll be joining Morrison, but the name "Kubert" is the subject of a *lot* of rumors...


The Dark Knight vs. TWO terrible foes:
The Joker...and the media!
BATMAN:
SECRETS
A 5-issue miniseries
Written and
lavishly illustrated by
SAM KIETH
MONTHLY
Premiering in March
DC
dccomics.com
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